Amendments to the Claims:

1. (currently amended) An asset having a structure combining both related content and data for distribution and service implementation in a digital cable system, comprising:

a metadata object, wherein the metadata object further comprises an application identifier identifying an application program associated with processing the asset and wherein the structure is understood by the application program identified by the application identifier; and

a content object, wherein the content object represents data to be stored based upon instructions originating from the application program as a result of interpreting the metadata object and wherein the metadata object identifies the content object.

2. (original) The asset of claim 1, further comprising an embedded asset, such that the asset is recursive.

3. (original) The asset of claim 2, wherein the embedded asset further comprises at least one embedded content object.

4. (original) The asset of claim 2, wherein the embedded asset further comprises at least one embedded metadata object.

5. (Previously Presented) The asset of claim 1, wherein the content object represents data selected from the group comprising an MPEG file, an executable file, an HTML page, and a JPEG image.

6. (Previously Presented) The asset of claim 1, wherein the metadata object identifies the content object as a movie.

7. (Previously Presented) The asset of claim 1, further comprising a machine readable description file that further identifies the content object.

8. (Previously Presented) The asset of claim 7, wherein the machine readable description file comprises XML.

9. (currently amended) A digital cable system that receives and delivers content and data related to the content to facilitate service implementation in a digital cable system, comprising:

a staging server that receives an asset having a structure from a content provider, wherein the asset comprises both the content and the data related to the content, the data related to the content further comprising an application identifier;

a content server storing the content and in communication with a subscriber set-top box for providing the content to the set-top box; and

a first application program configured to process a machine readable description file and the application identifier to identify a second application program understanding the structure of the asset, wherein the second application program interprets the data related to the content, and wherein the second application program identifies a server that receives the content from the staging server.

10. (currently amended) The system of claim 9, further comprising an asset management system comprising the first application program processing the data related to the content to identify the application program associated with the application identifier.

11. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 10, wherein the asset management system maintains a database associating the content and the data related to the content using the machine reasonable description file.

12. (currently amended) The system of claim 10, wherein the asset management system resides between the application program and the staging server such that the staging server and application program are in indirect communication.

13. (original) The system of claim 10, wherein the asset management system is operable to instruct the content server to request at least a portion of the content from the staging server.

14. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9, wherein the application is operable to identify the content server based upon the data related to the content.

15. (original) The system of claim 9, wherein the content server receives at least a portion of the content from the staging server.

16. (original) The system of claim 9, wherein the content server requests the at least a portion of the content from the staging server using File Transfer Protocol (FTP).

17. (original) The system of claim 9, wherein the application comprises a provisioning user interface to allow a user to identify the at least one server to receive at least a portion of the content.

18. (original) The system of claim 17, wherein the provisioning user interface allows a user to specify rules for distributing at least a portion of the content to the content server.

19. (currently amended) A method performed at a cable system headend for distributing content and metadata to facilitate service implementation in a digital cable system, comprising:

receiving an asset having a structure, wherein the asset comprises a metadata part and a content part, said metadata part comprising a machine readable description file identifying the structure of the asset and an application identifier;

storing the asset in a staging server;

parsing the metadata to determine an application program associated with the asset as identified by the application identifier;

examining the metadata at the application program to identify the content server that should receive at least a portion of the content; and

the application program instructing the content server to retrieve the content from the staging server.

20. (original) The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of receiving the content from the staging server.

21. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the receiving step comprises receiving the content directly from the staging server.

22. (currently amended) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of parsing the metadata further comprises:

retrieving a machine readable description file; and

parsing the machine readable description file to determine an application program associated with the asset and identified by the application identifier.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of examining the related data by the application further comprises the step of identifying at least one server of a plurality of servers that should receive at least a portion of the content based upon rules associated with the application.